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From: Weiler, Gregory
Sent: Thur 8/13/2015 6:29:56 PM
Subject: Colorado governor drinks mine water

The Latest: Colorado governor drinks river water after mine spill

Aug. 13, 2015

Updated 11:12 a.m.

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Goats drink fresh water after equipment operators from the Shiprock Chapter House delivered it to residence, Tuesday, Aug. 11, 2015, in Shiprock, N.M. Local officials in towns downstream from where millions of gallons of mine waste spilled into the San Juan River are demanding answers about possible long-term threats to the water supply. The 3 million gallons of mine waste included high concentrations of arsenic, lead and other heavy metals. Workers with the EPA accidentally unleashed the spill Wednesday as they inspected the abandoned mine site.
ALEXA ROGALS , AP

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In this aerial photo taken Tuesday, Aug. 11, 2015, waste water continues to stream out of the Gold King Mine near Silverton, Colo. Frustration is mounting throughout the Four Corners region among officials and residents who say the EPA has moved too slowly and hasn't been forthcoming about the dangers of the spill. GEOFF LIESIK , AP

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Ben Brown, with the Utah Department of Environmental Quality, left, collects a water sample from the San Juan River from hydrologic technician Ryan Parker, Tuesday, Aug. 11, 2015, in Montezuma Creek, Utah. A spill containing lead and arsenic from the abandoned Gold King Mine in Silverton, Colo., leaked into the Animas River, which flows into the San Juan River in southern Utah, on Aug. 5. The spill was caused by a mining and safety team working for the EPA. MATT YORK , AP

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Dried yellow residue remains on a rock in the now-closed Animas River due to the Gold King mine chemical spill, downstream from the mine, in Durango, Colo., Tuesday, Aug. 11, 2015. The EPA took full responsibility Tuesday for the mine waste spoiling rivers downstream from Silverton, Colorado, but people who live near the idled and leaking Gold King mine say local authorities and mining companies spent decades spurning federal cleanup help. BRENNAN LINSLEY , AP

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Bloomfield Mayor Scott Eckstein, Aztec Mayor Sally Burbridge, Farmington Mayor Tommy Roberts and New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas walk to a news conference at Berg Park in Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2015, in Farmington, N.M. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Gina McCarthy, on a visit Wednesday to Durango, Colo., downstream of the toxic waste spill site, said she had ordered agency personnel across the country to cease field investigation work on abandoned mines while the spill was investigated. JON AUSTRIA , AP

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An Environmental Protection Agency contractor works on the clean up in the aftermath of the accident at the Gold King mine, overseeing water flowing from the mine into a series of sediment retention ponds, mitigating damage from the spill of toxic wastewater, outside Silverton, Colo., Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2015. EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy, on a visit Wednesday to Durango, downstream of the spill site, said she had ordered agency personnel across the country to cease field investigation work on abandoned mines while the spill was investigated. BRENNAN LINSLEY , AP

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Environmental Protection Agency contractors prepare samples for shipping to an off-site EPA certified lab at an EPA Region 6 field office Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2015, in Farmington, N.M. EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy, on a visit Wednesday to Durango, Colo., downstream of the toxic waste spill site, said she had ordered agency personnel across the country to cease field investigation work on abandoned mines while the spill was investigated. JON AUSTRIA , AP

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Environmental Protection Agency contractors repair damage at the site of the Gold King mine spill of toxic wastewater, outside Silverton, Colo., Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2015. Toxic waste that gushed from the mine and threatened downstream water supplies in at least three states will continue to be dangerous when contaminated sediment gets stirred up from the river bottom, authorities said. BRENNAN LINSLEY , AP

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An Environmental Protection Agency contractor works on the clean up in the aftermath of the blowout at the Gold King mine, which triggered a major spill of toxic wastewater, outside Silverton, Colo., Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2015. The head of the Environmental Protection Agency has ordered agency offices nationwide to stop field investigation work for mine cleanups while they reassess the work to ensure there's no potential for spills similar to the one in Colorado. EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy announced the change Wednesday on a visit to Durango, Colo. BRENNAN LINSLEY , AP

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ALEXA ROGALS , AP

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DURANGO, Colo. – New Mexico’s environment secretary is criticizing Colorado’s governor for drinking water from the river contaminated by a mine spill.

Gov. John Hickenlooper put an iodine tablet in a bottle of Animas River water to kill bacteria before taking a gulp Tuesday. He was trying to prove the river was back to normal after 3 million gallons of mine waste containing heavy metals was unleashed last week.

The Farmington Daily Times reports that Secretary Ryan Flynn told residents there Wednesday night that the move was irresponsible and sent a bad message. He said Hickenlooper may as well have lit 15 cigarettes at once.

Hickenlooper, a Democrat, got attention in 2013 after saying he drank a form of fracking fluid to prove it was safe.

Colorado is allowing treatment plants to use river water again, but the Animas remains closed to boating.

THE EPA ADDRESSES NEW MEXICO

The head of the Environmental Protection Agency is visiting Farmington, New Mexico, to see how officials are dealing with the fallout from the Colorado mine waste spill that traveled downstream.

EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy is scheduled to meet with state, local and tribal officials Thursday and address reporters on a trail along the Animas River.

The visit follows her stop upstream in Durango, Colorado, on Wednesday. There, McCarthy said she was heartbroken by the spill and announced that investigation field work would stop at mines nationwide as the agency looks into what led up to last week’s disaster.

An EPA-led crew accidentally unleashed 3 million gallons of wastewater containing metals such as arsenic, lead and iron.

Colorado says it's now safe for Durango to process river water into drinking water.

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"Out of the long list of nature's gifts to man, none is perhaps so utterly essential to human life as soil."
Hugh Hammond Bennett